

**BCHM 39000 Professional Development Seminar  
Syllabus  
Fall 2016**

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this course is to help biochemistry students with professional development and career planning. The course will explore career possibilities for biochemists. In the context of professional development, students will create a resume and cover letter or personal statement, participate in a mock interview, and develop a career plan.

**DEPARTMENTAL LEARNING OUTCOMES ADDRESSED BY THIS COURSE**

BCHM 39000 students will understand the contributions of our discipline to society, including improvements to medicine, agriculture, the economy and the environment.

BCHM 39000 students will acquire information literacy: the ability to locate, evaluate, and utilize information in the disciplines of biochemistry and molecular biology that is required for research, data analysis, and communication

**TEXTBOOK**

No textbook is required.

**LECTURE TIME AND PLACE**

Thursdays 1:30-2:20, BCHM 101

**BLACKBOARD**

The syllabus for the course and assignment information will be available via the Purdue University Blackboard site at: <http://www.itap.purdue.edu/learning/tools/blackboard/>

## ASSESSMENT

The grading for this course will be as follows:

Resume	75 points
Personal Statement or Cover letter	75 points
Resume or Personal Statement or Cover letter (second draft)	25 points
Interview reflection	75 points
Career development plan	100 points
<u>Class participation</u>	<u>50 points</u>
Total	400 points

**There is a 10% penalty for late work.**

The cutoff values for letter grades are as follows:

A>=93%, A-=90, B+=86, B=83, B-=80, C+=76, C=73, C-=70, D+=66, D=63, D-=60,  
F<=59

## EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit (maximum 20 points) may be obtained by attending a career or grad/professional school fair and submitting a one-page report on companies/universities represented and providing proof in the form of business cards or fliers that you interacted with at least three representatives. Reports must be turned in **no later than 2 weeks after** the career/grad fair that is attended. Recommended fairs are: Industrial Roundtable (September 15-16), Big 10+ Grad School Expo (October 4-5 – please note that you must pre-register to attend this event!) and Ag Career Fair (October 6). The full calendar of career fairs can be found on the CCO website at:

<https://www.cco.purdue.edu/asp/Calendar/Calendar.asp?type=1&CCOGroup=Student&Limit=All>

## OBTAINING EXTRA HELP

Ms. Pogradichniy will be available to answer your questions immediately after class or during office hours by appointment (arranged by e-mail). Alternatively, you can submit questions by e-mail.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

In accordance with University policy, you are expected to attend every scheduled class. If you have a valid reason for missing class such as a University-sponsored activity, religious observances, illness, or family emergency, the instructor or TA will assist you in obtaining information and materials you may have missed. Students who skip class without a valid excuse should not expect the instructor or TA to supply class notes or provide special help. For the official university policy, see: [www.purdue.edu/odos/services/classabsence.php](http://www.purdue.edu/odos/services/classabsence.php) and [http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations\\_procedures/classes.html](http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html)

As a seminar course, your participation in classroom discussions is critical. You obviously cannot participate if you do not attend. Therefore, 2 participation points per class period

will be awarded for each class session you attend for a total of 30 points. The remaining 20 participation points will be earned by introducing one of our guest speakers or asking a well thought-out question of one of our speakers following their presentation. More information will be provided during class. In addition, it is important to show respect for our speakers by being on time for each class session. Any student who is more than 10 minutes late will be counted as absent.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated in any course offered by the Department of Biochemistry. Information on Purdue's policies with regard to academic misconduct can be found at

[http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student\\_conduct/regulations.html](http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student_conduct/regulations.html)

Any incidence of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Academic misconduct may result in disciplinary sanctions including expulsion, suspension, probated suspension, disciplinary probation, and/or educational sanctions. In addition, such misconduct will result in punitive grading such as:

- receiving a lower or failing grade on the assignment, or
- assessing a lower or failing grade for the course

Punitive grading decisions will be made after consultation with the Office of the Dean of Students. Please note reported incidences of academic misconduct go on record for reference by other instructors. Further, a record of academic misconduct is likely to influence how current/future situations are handled.

To provide you with an unambiguous definition of academic misconduct, the following text has been excerpted from "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students", written by Stephen Akers, Ph.D., Executive Associate Dean of Students (1995, Revised 1999, 2003), and published by the Office of the Dean of Students in cooperation with Purdue Student Government, Schleman Hall of Student Services, Room 207, 475 Stadium Mall Drive West Lafayette, IN 47907-2050.

"Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, *Student Regulations*] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]

More specifically, the following are a few examples of academic dishonesty which have been discovered at Purdue University.

- substituting on an exam for another student
- substituting in a course for another student
- paying someone else to write a paper and submitting it as one's own work
- giving or receiving answers by use of signals during an exam
- copying with or without the other person's knowledge during an exam
- doing class assignments for someone else
- plagiarizing published material, class assignments, or lab reports
- turning in a paper that has been purchased from a commercial research firm or obtained from the internet

- padding items of a bibliography
- obtaining an unauthorized copy of a test in advance of its scheduled administration
- using unauthorized notes during an exam
- collaborating with other students on assignments when it is not allowed
- obtaining a test from the exam site, completing and submitting it later
- altering answers on a scored test and submitting it for a regrade
- accessing and altering grade records
- stealing class assignments from other students and submitting them as one's own
- fabricating data
- destroying or stealing the work of other students

Plagiarism is a special kind of academic dishonesty in which one person steals another person's ideas or words and falsely presents them as the plagiarist's own product. This is most likely to occur in the following ways:

- using the exact language of someone else without the use of quotation marks and without giving proper credit to the author
- presenting the sequence of ideas or arranging the material of someone else even though such is expressed in one's own words, without giving appropriate acknowledgment
- submitting a document written by someone else but representing it as one's own"

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. To get information about changes in this course consult the class Blackboard site or e-mail or phone the instructor.

### **ON-LINE COURSE EVALUATIONS**

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor. To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT**

Purdue University's non-discrimination policy will be upheld in this classroom. Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University views, evaluates, and treats all persons in any University related activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as individuals on the basis of their own personal abilities, qualifications, and other relevant characteristics.

For more information, see [http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.html](http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html).

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Resume Assignment. First draft due September 22**

This assignment consists of preparing your personal resume, a document providing an overview of your professional life that you can present to potential employers. It is typically one to two pages long and contains a brief overview of your background (education, work experience, relevant activities), skills and accomplishments, and career goals. A well-prepared resume is essential to your job search.

You have a great deal of latitude in format and content, but some **basic information** needs to be included in any resume. These include such items as your *name, address, and telephone number* at the beginning. A *permanent address* or other backup way for someone to contact you can be important if you may reside elsewhere during college breaks. Personal information such as social security number, marital status, age, hobbies or health should NOT be included in your resume.

You should present your qualifications as effectively as possible. Qualifications include both **education** and **experience**, each in its own section. There may also be other items of interest such as leadership **activities, honors**, or special skills that you want to mention. Such items can be very important to employers.

Including a **career objective** statement is *optional* but can be useful to you in deciding whether or not certain items are relevant for inclusion in the resume. A career objective should be *specific and concise* so it tells the employer that you are interested in their job. If you can't be specific in your career objective, *leave it off*. Some people who are interested in more than one kind of job prepare separate resumes with different career objectives.

**References** are essential to have ready to go when they are requested by a potential employer. *Be sure to identify your references page with your name. For this assignment, it will be necessary to include names and contact information of three references with your resume.* References should be organized in a convenient format and should include telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Who should you use as references? People who know you and who *agree* to write a letter or answer questions verbally if called upon. Your academic advisor should nearly always be included when you are a student or a recent graduate. Other professors can also be used, but you may have other people better acquainted with your work experience who you will choose to use. Three references is the most common number, although you can have more. Whoever they are, you should *ask their permission* before using them as references in an actual job search. Using a relative as a reference is generally not acceptable. Also, so called "character references" (religious leaders, family friends) are not usually found on a professional resume. Your references should be people who can discuss you as a potential employee.

You may have prepared a resume for another course or purpose. Such resumes can be used, at least as a starting point. Your resume is a *living document* that you will be updating throughout your professional career, so save an electronic copy that you will have access to later. Feel free to bring your resume in for the instructor to review before the due date if you have specific questions.

## **Personal Statement or Cover Letter Assignment. Due October 13**

Your second assignment will depend on your career goals. If you plan to apply for graduate or professional school, you will write a personal statement. If you plan to apply for a full-time job following graduation, you will write a cover letter.

1) A **personal statement** provides graduate and professional programs the opportunity to learn more about you. Each type of application has different length requirements and questions/prompts that you must address. Their objectives are basically the same: trying to get to know a bit more about you and discover your motivations for wanting to enter their specific field. **Select an actual program you would like to apply to and include a copy of or link to that program's personal statement requirements with your assignment.**

This is your opportunity to expand upon your experiences or to address anything that you feel has not already been covered in your application. The essay, as much as possible, should give them insight into you. How have various experiences motivated you and changed the way you view the world? What unique qualities do you bring? What have you gained from various experiences? Saying that you are a very empathetic person isn't really helpful. You need to give concrete examples of how this has played out in your life. Remember that most applicants are generally very well qualified. So it is important to take writing your personal statement seriously. Hopefully, this assignment will give you a good start. Most students find that writing a personal statement is difficult. It is hard to know where to begin and it almost always sounds lame when you read it back to yourself. It does not generally read this way to others. So make sure you get help from other readers. You can contact your advisor, other professors, professionals you know in the field, or the Office of Pre-Professional Advising at Purdue ([preprofessional@purdue.edu](mailto:preprofessional@purdue.edu)). There are many internet resources you can consult for ideas as well.

2) A **cover letter** is often mailed or emailed with your resume to constitute a request for a job interview with a specific company or agency. **Select an actual job announcement or advertisement and submit a copy or link with your letter.** Addressing a specific position description will make it easier for you to write a meaningful cover letter.

The cover letter is your chance to individualize the material you send to a potential employer. It is a formal letter, so you should **use an appropriate business letter format**. See the sample provided as well as search online for examples. Usually your letter should be addressed to a specific individual, and should include that person's business title and address. It should show that you know something about the company or agency and can envision yourself as their employee. You can emphasize some of the information that is covered on your resume. You can also supply additional information that you feel would be of interest to this particular employer even though it was not covered on the resume.

Your letter should clearly express your interest in a particular job and tell why you are the one they should hire for that job. Mention a job announcement or other source of information from which you learned of the job. This makes it easier to explain how you fit the needs for the job. Emphasize the experience, education, and personal characteristics you have that qualify you for the job.

Make it as easy as possible for the employer to contact you by telling them the best time to call you and including your telephone number. Express the hope that you will hear from them soon. An alternative is to suggest that you will contact them. Be sure to specify a time if you follow this alternative. Employers are much more likely to have a response ready and be prepared to discuss it with you if they know when to expect your call.

Read the letter yourself and see how it would sound to you if you were receiving it. Looking at it from the recipient's side may help you polish the letter and improve its overall tone. Be careful to avoid spelling and grammatical errors in your letter as well as in your resume. Remember that these materials are representing you at a time when you want to look your best. Someone is likely to have to decide whom to interview by looking at a stack of letters and resumes. They will form an initial impression of you before they ever meet you. A good letter along with a wellprepared resume can be very helpful to your cause.

### **Revised Resume or Cover Letter. Due October 27**

Improve your resume, personal statement or cover letter based on feedback from the course instructor, your peers, the CCO and other sources. You can submit one of these, whichever you feel would be most helpful, for up to 25 points.

### **Mock Interview Reflection. Due November 10**

Participate in a mock interview, which will be arranged by the instructor. After your interview, you will receive feedback. Write a short, reflective essay (1-2 pages) critiquing your performance in the interview, and taking into account the feedback you received, share what areas you may need to improve upon and some concrete plans for doing so.

### **Career Development Plan. Due December 1**

Select an area to explore – employment, graduate school, professional school, etc. Decide which specific field to investigate: pharmaceutical sciences, forensic medicine, neurobiology, etc. Investigate potential institutions/companies online, and select **three** programs or employers for further exploration. What are the entrance requirements for these programs? What are the program deadlines? What are the qualifications for these positions? Visit application websites for these programs/employers and evaluate what materials you need to complete the application – Resume? Personal statement? Scores on national exams? Letters of recommendation/references? In your introduction, briefly explain your ultimate career goal and how the steps you are exploring here will help you achieve your goals. Compare the three potential programs/employers, making a list of pluses and minuses for each of them. Evaluate how your training matches up with the list of requirements. What do you need to do to better match the opportunities? Create a plan of action. You may want to include a timeline to take into account deadlines for exams and applications, if those apply.